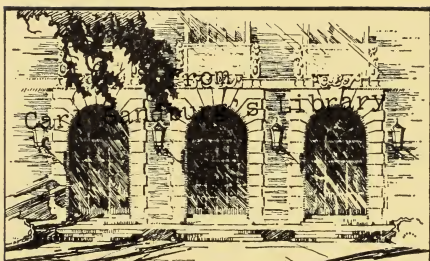


811  
W586ho

# The Hour of Judgment

---

VIOLA C. WHITE



LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS

from  
Carl Sandburg's Library

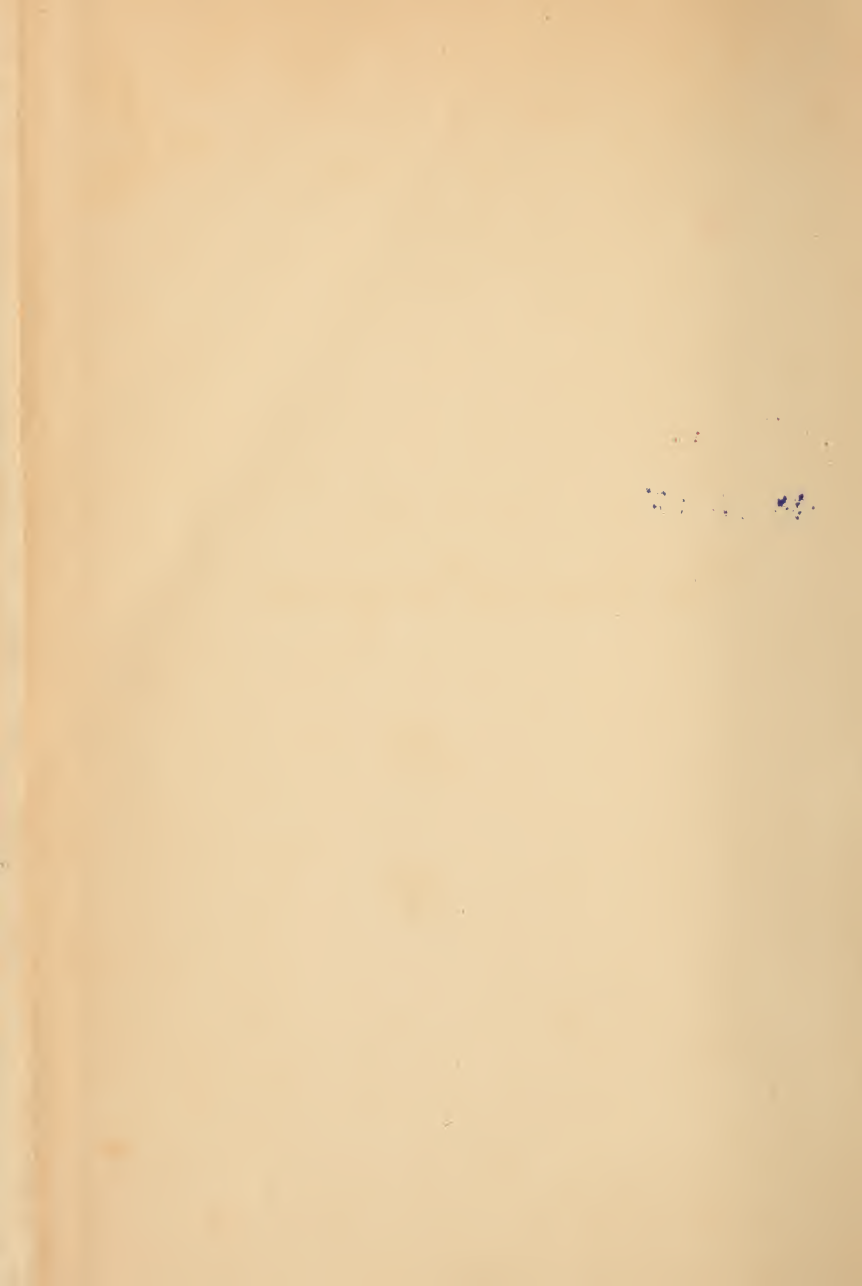
811  
W586 ho

To Mr. Carl Sandburg


With best wishes of the  
author,

Viola C. White

May, 1925



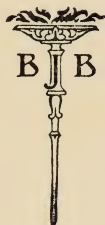
# The Hour of Judgment



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2012 with funding from  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

# The Hour of Judgment

VIOLA C. WHITE



BOSTON  
B. J. BRIMMER COMPANY  
MDCCCCXXIII

Copyright, 1923  
B. J. BRIMMER COMPANY  
Boston

Press of GOODMAN BROTHERS, INC.  
Boston



To V.D.S.

THOUGHT of my thought, and teacher of my youth,  
Since the white, lyric time of early day  
The trampling years have trod my field to clay,  
And few stalks for the harvesting remain.  
I would I might have borne abundant grain,—  
Yet from the winnowing of this, I pray,  
There come the dark and bitter seed of truth!



## THE HOUR OF JUDGMENT

Poems included in this collection have appeared in the New York *Call*, *Casements*, the *Liberator*, the *Stratford Journal*, the *Socialist Review* and the *World Tomorrow*.



## CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	15
The Hour of Judgment . . . . .	17

### THE OLD ORDER

Gray Wolf . . . . .	21
Three Men and Three Fowls . . . . .	22
Renegade . . . . .	23
The Asylum . . . . .	24
The Wonder-Worker . . . . .	25
A Fragmentary Trial . . . . .	26
Preparedness . . . . .	27
The Conquering Nation . . . . .	33
Pro Patria . . . . .	36
To Holy Church 1918 . . . . .	37
Atlas . . . . .	40
Russia to the Allies . . . . .	41
Charity . . . . .	43
At the Sewing Circle . . . . .	44
To a Condemned Man . . . . .	45
Life Divided . . . . .	47
To a Caged Bear . . . . .	48
Eugene V. Debs . . . . .	49
The Angel of the Record . . . . .	50

### OUT OF THE EAST

I. Dialogue in Jerusalem . . . . .	55
II. Dialogue in Calcutta . . . . .	62
The Chinese Dragon Soliloquizes . . . . .	69

### THE CHANGING ORDER

The Russian Revolution . . . . .	77
----------------------------------	----



## INTRODUCTION

AS a poet, Miss White has already had impressive introduction to lovers of literature, and particularly to students of contemporary verse, through the publication in 1921 of her volume, "Horizons," as the eighth number of the Yale Series of Younger Poets. The Series, we are told, was "designed to afford a publishing medium for the work of younger men and women who have not yet secured a wide public recognition;" and was announced "to include only such verse as seems to give the fairest promise for the future of American poetry." Edited by Professor Charlton M. Lewis and published by the Yale University Press, the books in this Series have taken high place among the publications of our day, and have brought deserved distinction to their authors. Work by any one of this company of singers, among whom Vola C. White is by no means the least, is certain now to be recognized and received on its merits.

Another reason, therefore, than that of "introduction," dictates to me, as it may have suggested to Miss White, the writing of these paragraphs. It is hoped, by us both, perhaps, that another company of readers than that of lovers of poetry merely, may be attracted to the pages of this second volume. A comparison of it with its predecessor, "Horizons," will show promptly what I mean.

The earlier book, lovely as it is, is more or less conventional. The subjects of the poems—"Clouds," "To a Sea Gull," "Wind and Ocean," "October," "Dandelion," "Past and Future," "Fairy Message," "Sunday

Morning," "Child of Adam," "Ballad," "Venice," "The North Wind," etc., etc., tell the story. There is originality in these pieces, true imagination, much beauty, some real experience, but it is expressed, both in form and content, safely inside the lines of accepted tradition. What we have in "Horizons" is a highly gifted poet happily conscious of genius, trying out her powers and manifesting interest in her art. She does what other poets have done and will always do—uses familiar materials, in not unfamiliar ways, for the sheer joy of the song and of its singing.

To turn from the first book to its successor within these covers is to experience a shock. There is almost nothing in "Horizons" to prepare one for what is encountered in "The Hour of Judgment"—a hint, perhaps in "Litany of the Comfortable" or "Concerning Martyrdom", but a hint so slight that it is plainly a product of the unconscious. In this second book the author is so changed as to be unrecognizable. She bears the same name, but no other quality to identify her. Where formerly was lightness and gaiety, is now deep and stern emotion. A simplicity almost terrible has crept into much of the work, varied at times by a Dantesque intensity and elaboration which reveal depths too profound for this young poet yet to plumb. Her subjects have completely changed—not a single nature poem appears within this volume! The author's gaze has been altogether lifted from the pleasant things of earth. As John in Patmos saw not the surrounding verge of sea and sky, but only the doom of the City of God, so Miss White looks over and



beyond "horizons" to the looming terror of "the hour of judgment." Something has happened to this poet. She has been shaken to the foundations of her being. Earthquakes have upheaved her soul, and shown her things within herself not seen or known before. The result is the discovery of profound convictions, the laying hold on spiritual realities that lift the soul to life. And the record are these poems that burn like flame, and reveal like flashes of lightning.

What happened, of course, was the World War. Read these poems, and see how the soul that breathed them forth marched with the procession of events like a "mystic trumpeter!" Here, in the opening pieces, is "the old order" which stamped upon the single life the sign of the contagion with which our western world is sick. Then come the War, America betrayed, the church traitor to its Christ, Debs in prison for the nation's sins, the Russian Revolution, the vision "out of the East" of Gandhi—phases of the cataclysm which shook the world. Finally, in the superb lyrical drama, "The Russian Revolution," the vision in Russia of a "changing order" which shall bring a better world! Note the last line on the opening page:—

"And the old order is dead;"

Then the last line on the closing page:—

"The new world waits our hammering; we build!"

So run these poems the gamut of the vastest epoch in human history.

This book will be admired for the poetry it contains. I want it admired as well for the prophecy it speaks.

Must not every great poet be also a prophet? Can any mastery of technique or magic of art compensate for a poet's lack of feeling for his age and its travail for the future? Is not Poe, for all his art, inferior to Whitman, who had no art, but throbbed in every spiritual vein with the pulse-beat of American democracy? Are not Wordsworth's desertion of the revolutionary spirit, and Shelley's espousal of that spirit, a fitting measure of that loftier range to which the younger genius soared? It seems to me that "The Hour of Judgment" marks a distinct gain in literary power over the earlier book, "Horizons." But this does not interest me as compared with its revelation of deepened and true feeling of the times in which we live. The last decade has been rich in poetry; but little of it has expressed other than conventional reaction to the terrific events which have made this decade so momentous. Perhaps the events have been too terrific—the wars and revolutions too momentous! But some souls have responded in inspired speech, as others have responded in heroic action. And among these former is the author of this book. Just to note how she has sensed the significance of the Russian Revolution, is to get the measure of her spirit, at once poetic and prophetic, and thus truly great! Miss White has in this volume revealed, as in a vision, the vast edifice of song which is some day to rise as a perpetual memorial from out the blasted foundations of our age; and, as though in pledge of the reality of this vision, she has hewn her own fair stones for the rearing of the pile. Such work is all too frequently "without honor." May it not be so here!

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

# The Hour of Judgment



## The Hour of Judgment

*YOU think that, clad in lightning, he  
Will run on earth disastrously,  
That, seeing him shake on the air  
You will have warning to prepare?  
No! He is listening and low.  
Like a ragman he must go  
A dark way full of murmurings  
Till he hear the final things:—  
The crying of the hungry child,  
The worker, "I no more believe,"  
The dream that shouts unreconciled,  
Though cell or torment it receive,  
Of what a new dawn shall achieve.  
Then he nods his ponderous head,—  
And the old order is dead.*



*The Old Order*





# Gray Wolf

PRESS all your weight against the door!  
The gray wolf howls about.  
Press all your weight against the door,  
With all your weight to keep him out.  
If for an instant you let go  
What will come in with the snow?  
Woe to the sick, woe to the old!  
Their bolts and bars will never hold.  
Press all your weight against the door.  
What do the safely housed do more?

## Three Men and Three Fowls

“THREE men gaping hungrily,  
Now the evening lights are lit,  
In a restaurant window, see  
Three fowls, turning on a spit.  
All their hands will have to pass  
Is a little pane of glass.”

“Hold your tongue, my silly friend,  
That will never be the end.  
Law, religion, court and mart  
Keep the men and fowls apart.”

# Renegade

THE forts his warring manhood won  
His age abandons, post by post ;  
And inconceivably a man  
Is conquered by a ghost.

# The Asylum

I HAVE never known any peace here,—I have never known any peace day or night, yet this is my life and I can no longer imagine what life would be without its walls or otherwise. There are too many words. They have given us organ music, but in the pauses there is always someone raving. They have given us ordered ways and a fire on the hearth, but they cannot give us rest . . .

When I first waked to a consciousness that my walls were guarded I was young and inclined to fraternize with my fellows, partly out of interest and sympathy, partly from a conviction that my case was different from theirs. I thought that I was placed here for the purpose of observing them. I recollect strolling from cell to cell to investigate and comprehend every point of view. Many were sick with the delusion of grandeur, many with the delusion of wrong. Not a few,—and from these I noted that the guards seldom turned their eyes,—had discovered the only way by which their oppressed companions might be delivered, and were undergoing for the sake of truth martyrdoms inconceivably solitary.

There are endless corridors, there are endless cells where the feeble-minded lead their acquiescent existence.

All that we seek is rest, but we cannot even understand one another's insecurity. We have been assigned to separate rooms.

# The Wonder-Worker

ALAS, Janiculus! I have travelled far. Heaven, or the Devil,—for the sacred voice of the people is divided on the subject,—has abundantly blessed my works. I have given sight to the blind. He has gazed upon a barren hillside and a flea-bitten cur till he died. I have given speech to the dumb, that he may revile his neighbor fluently as those that have always tongues. I have given power to men with iron weapons that they might walk upon water, for matter cannot gainsay immortal spirit; arrived at the other side they have started in to murder the inhabitants. He whom I delivered from a wasting sickness became again the intolerable nuisance of the village, with one more tale to relate from sunrise to sundown. One I restored to life at his mother's prayer (a mother, I suppose, would weep over any sort of son if he were dead), swathed in habiliments of another citizenship, returned to the swilling and the wastry, knowing nought of the vision of eternity save an unpleasing experience well ended.

I hear the mob like an army of locusts on the wing.

## A Fragmentary Trail

I TRAILED on steppes and wildernesses hoary  
The sower and the reaper as they passed,  
Controlling Nature. In the epic story  
Of mine and lumber-camp and furnace-blast  
I saw the work take power and take glory  
From him that made it, silent to the last.  
I saw the veiled god grope through his creation.

# Preparedness

(New Year's Eve, 1916)

THE unregarded nights show forth a sign.  
This night are judged the unregarded nights  
That passed in sleep.  
A careless people keep  
With multitudinous tumult and with wine  
Their latest vigil for an evil year,  
Blinding the eye with lights,  
Closing the ear,  
Lest haply they should see the truth or hear.

Out of the night, unsummoned and unsought,  
Shaped on the darkness of prophetic thought,  
The awful witnesses are drawing near.  
The army of the dead advances. Hurled  
From clouds in ultimate wreckage and in flame  
They fall; from Baltic caverns they arise,  
The cold betrayal yet within their eyes.  
Earth swarms with ghosts innumerable sent  
From outposts of the world.  
From the Masurian Lakes and from the Marne  
Driven and violent  
They rise, from out Galicia and Louvain  
Advance. The Dardanelles give up their slain,  
And Verdun sends them forth.  
Asia and Africa offer sons to fall  
In the Carpathian ranges of the north.  
Again the Dolomites reverberate

Death of the gallant young, dying for old men's hate.  
Behind them, grisly as from martyrdom,  
More solitary than the dead are, given  
No natural citizenship in earth or heaven,  
The armies of the mutilated come;  
And women, like a midnight river-flow  
Around the dead, around the wounded, go,—  
Women that gave to birth  
Strong sons, in lustihood to reap and sow  
The ground's abundant mirth,  
Beholding them waste burden of waste earth.  
I hear the unborn children of the nations  
Fly in the wind, crying of habitations  
Made desolate, wailing their heritage  
Of premature old age, disease and care,  
In life they sought not but will have to share.  
From land and sea and air  
The witnesses appear.  
The night is crowded with wide-flung lament.  
Suddenly bells ring clear  
For the incoming year.  
The ghosts adown time's crumbling steep are sent.  
Earth, ocean, sky, stretch innocent and bare.  
O were they naught to ye, all ye that have passed by?  
I know not if among  
The revellers, some saw  
The darkness shining as the fearful light.  
I saw and I must speak, albeit with stammering tongue.

America, whose sculptured eidolon of Liberty  
Guideth the ancient peoples unto thee,



What mean the cannon thou hast set beside,  
Trained on the adverse sea?  
Shall then the enginery of murder tell  
A tale hospitable  
To seekers of thy refuge from the tide?  
Dream not that Europe can behold thy weapon, wrought  
Of the dark metal of her overthrow  
Without some doubtful thought  
Of what thine armed benevolence may hide.  
Thou only canst set free  
The air from death, and earth's resounding coasts,  
And the dim tumult of the tide-swung ghosts,  
From fear's inexorable prophecy.  
Disarming utterly  
Thou shalt become invincible to lead  
Up the stern heights of peace.  
The nations call thee in their utmost need,  
America,—and shall they call in vain?  
There is a stain of gold upon thy hand  
More ineffaceable than blood. Thine eyes  
Reveal shrewd calculation and surmise  
Of little else than self-security.  
Thou are not safe one hour! As fear draws hate  
And lust, fulfillment, though an ocean part,  
The evidence of thine uncandid heart,—  
The iron trap,—shall catch war soon or late.  
Thou who hast seen Europe without surcease  
Yearly pile up her armament's increase,  
That unused force defend her every good,  
Beholding the fruition of her peace,

Art thou preparing with deliberate breath  
The self-same tillage for thy field of death?

I know not why the dead of many lands  
Are brought together in one grave, unless  
The mutuality that life denied  
Death must of dark necessity express,—  
The law of fellowship that, cast aside  
In peace, when want has cried without redress,  
Contagion of disease at length has ratified.  
The law engraved on primal rock by fate  
Man cannot alter nor equivocate,  
And when with forward heart he has defied  
The holier verities  
Of fellowship, the angel of love's wrath  
Points back into the path  
With whirling scourge of death and of disease.  
Such is the law for men,  
Nor yet for nations is it otherwise.  
A righteous people makes a righteous state.  
If we cannot apprise  
The rooted calm of England, and the great  
Ardor of France, that thought with action blends,  
And Germany's titanic singleness  
Of will, delaying fate,  
Making them only source of dividends,  
Then truly what futurity portends  
Is far less perilous  
For these, the much-enduring, than for us.  
It is a condemnation of our peace

That youth leaps into war as to a tide  
Of cleansing and release,  
As one from madness turns to suicide.

There is a peace more challenging than death,  
Peace without respite and without retreat,  
Stern peace, that harrieth  
The Beast, to drive him out of every street,  
Within the land's recesses making fast  
The linkage of the new state with the past,  
Until one hour, consummately sweet,  
Unbinds our necks forever from the yoke  
Our own hands forged in dream, or ever we awoke.  
Such is the peace that our sons must complete.  
Then when thou art made just  
In every part, canst thou of justice speak,  
O nation eloquent on others' sin!  
What equity of law does Georgia seek?  
Is New York's benediction on the meek,  
Or Colorado holier than Berlin?

When thou hast made thee just  
In all thy dealing, verily I trust  
That at thy magnanimity will rise  
High-heartedness in others; yet if fate  
Accomplish otherwise,  
If plotted baseness of another state  
Be turned on thee, my country, this I know,—  
(History, fed on many-rivered tears  
And witnesser of many-altared woe,  
Cassandra that no living nation hears,  
Has spoken so):

Force never conquered force,  
War never ended war.  
It breeds the hate that breeds the war again.  
The righteous children of a righteous nation,  
Before they let it slay or violate  
Must choose to suffer death or violation.

A nation cannot live in boundaries nor swords.  
Within the dark and boundless hearts of men  
It is a trumpet blast and a desire,  
An inextinguishable beacon-fire.  
Poland and Belgium live; Jerusalem,  
Time's holocaust that folds eternity,  
Adown steep lightning of the morning star  
Looks on the blown dust of her conquerors.

The freedom that I supplicate for thee,  
America, is neither ringed with swords,  
Nor portioned by war lords.  
She moves,—a flying light proclaimed where she is not,—  
Above disastrous peaks and cities where  
Necessity is linked with ardent thought.  
Fire and cross prepare for her the throne  
That she ascends alone,—  
The accepted and incarnadined sign  
Of right divine.  
She holds the domination of a land  
That force cannot protect nor desecrate.  
I charge thee that she stand within thy gate  
Defended by the torch within her hand,  
America,—it is not yet too late!

# The Conquering Nation

(A Vision of War Overcome)

I KNOW not where their onward march is stayed  
On burning mountain or prophetic cloud.  
I only know that when War cried aloud,—  
The idol crafty-mouthed, whose bidding made  
Art, science, statecraft, press, religion, crowd  
About his altar, whereupon they laid,  
With genuflection reverent and proud,  
Youth's entrails ever dripping as they prayed,  
When other nations to his terror bowed,  
War called this nation,—and it disobeyed.

On every side the night became a wound  
That gaped incurably, the day grew dense  
With the earth-shaking anguish of suspense,  
Save here, where rose the customary sound  
Of scythe in standing grain, of diligence  
In home and shop and ordered plot of ground.  
No worker made munitions for defence,  
No profiteer with blood-stained "honor" crowned  
The machinations of his veiled offence.  
They lived, they worked in steadfastness profound.

The neighbors' children with their gathered food  
They fed; they nursed the ruined and the maimed;  
And when, with lies of overlords inflamed,  
A hostile army poured its multitude  
Past their frontier, priest, leader, sage, proclaimed

The glory of unyielding fortitude.  
They had no need; the people's own heart framed  
What law the nation lived by. They pursued,  
Unto a goal derided and defamed,  
The pillar of immortal light they viewed.

The invaders issued insolent command.  
No citizen obeyed. In vain they tried  
To force their will, by quietness defied.  
They turned and wrecked their vengeance on the land,  
On field and home, on well and orchard-side,  
On priest and peasant. Seeing men withstand  
Like gods who died, knowing for what they died,  
Without a curse, without a sword in hand,  
The ranks began to murmur and divide.  
Question arose, and clamorous demand.

For want of fuel hatred flickered out.  
The hatred that had been on falsehood fed  
Burned out, and only shame burned on instead.  
Where was the foe to put to sudden rout,  
Armed to the teeth? The charges to be led?  
The deadly ambush they were told about?  
These people, friends of mankind, had not shed  
Blood, even of their invaders. Lies throughout,  
Their country's own lies led them here, to spread  
On summer fields like pestilence or drought.

The glory drought or pestilence might bring  
Was all the glory that they stood to gain,—  
The tears of women, labor rendered vain,

And harmless folk on waste land perishing.  
So far the expedition's fruit was plain,—  
And how about that dimly flapping thing,  
The rumored purpose back of the campaign,—  
Powers for oil and iron hankering?  
Against a war no nation dared explain  
The soldiers rose, resentful, murmuring.

They overbore their officers. They pushed  
Beyond the frontier. Mutinous they went  
Back to the land that poured them forth, to vent  
Their wrath upon their overlords. They rushed  
With weapons yet in hand to parliament,  
Where for a space the humming hive grew hushed  
For fear of deeds without a precedent.  
They took possession. At one stroke they brushed  
Webs of intrigue aside. With sure intent  
The order of world empery they crushed.

Their nation left the war. It disarrayed  
Itself of victory at victory's height.  
Earth's patient peoples out of weary night  
Rose, flocking to the standard here displayed.  
The people's will, that bade the earth unite  
And left the lords without dominion, made  
Peace upon earth in majesty and might.  
They were the conquerors who, unafraid,  
Beyond their graves pursued immortal light.  
I know not where their onward march is stayed.



## Pro Patria

A BOMB that crashes through a house on sleeping children.

A man that, winning friendship of another,  
Worms out his secret, only to betray.

A liner submarined, the life-boat tossed

All night on winter sea. A rotting mound  
Where grain was growing, where a woman, crazed,  
Wandering past, cries out, "A jolly war!"

Earth's quiet folk, made venomous with hate,  
Gloating at ruined cities and maimed boys,  
Standing upon irreparable loss,  
To shout of victory.



# To Holy Church, 1918

(This is retained as a specimen of wartime animosity. Its condemnation of the Church is as bitter as the Church's condemnation of its enemies. V.C.W.).

**T**RAITOR that with a kiss unfalteringly  
Betrayest thy Lord throughout the stricken years,  
With eloquence and solemn litany  
Still offering to the nations blood and tears,  
Bearing thy puny gift of hate to blend  
With Europe's madness, as in jungles, when  
The lions locked in lethal strife contend,  
The jackal howls in chorus from the fen;  
Grave-digger for ten millions of young men,  
Thine own grave thou preparest at the last,  
Inexorably deep, for thee alone!  
With malediction thou hast made it fast,  
With unforgiveness set the final stone.  
Sleep thy last sleep therein! I wish thee nought  
Of dream more evil than thy hands have wrought!

Lie down! Behold from the corrupting tomb  
The generations of thy flock go by,  
Thy bowed and nameless worshippers, with doom  
Of ghostly fear and mortal misery,—  
The Negro fixed in fetters at thy word,  
The children out of factory and mine  
Who cried until thy ministers were stirred  
To seal their servitude with speech divine,  
The silent women rendered by thy sign  
Subservient forever to man's lust

Through magic of Hebraic legend old,  
The peasants that uprising put their trust  
In Reformation, back to bondage sold  
When Luther urged the princes' whips to smite  
And drowned in blood the slowly dawning light.

These are thy faithful ones; and now behold  
The enemies commended to thy care.  
From Ferrer's cell in Barcelona's hold  
To Bruno's field of burning, how the air  
Reeks of the myriad torment thou hast given  
To saint and scholar, heretic and seer!  
Wherever Science on the earth has striven  
To send beyond the farthest known frontier  
The prairie wagons of the pioneer  
Stark spectres from thy ruined hearth recite  
The ancient curse; and if at length mankind  
Receive the truth against thy will, despite  
The nets eternal thou hast made to bind,  
Thou claimest it, when centuries are spent,—  
And seekest reward for thine enlightenment.

Stay of the rich and tamer of the poor,  
Fed by the vultures from the battle-surge  
That bear thee meat therefrom, thou shalt endure  
No longer! Look, thou standest on the verge  
Of thine own grave. Lie down therein and sleep,  
Thine allies go with thee,—fear, slavery,  
Witchcraft and holocaust of nations. Deep  
As hell the staging of that dream shall be.

And after it may darkness utterly  
Encompass thee, the darkness thou hast made  
The beacon of the world; deep underground  
With stone and dripping water be thou laid.  
Above thy sleep the victory shall sound,  
The tumult of another era's birth.  
Then rise up if thou canst, and save the earth!

# Atlas

AGE after age the Titan held,  
Through blinding snow and thunder-wrack,  
Temple and forest, field and mine.

He held the earth upon his back.

Earth's people of importance came.

They peered sagacious o'er the rim  
Where through the shadow Atlas loomed,  
To see what could be done for him.

One said, "The man should stand erect,  
And view the stars with lifted head."

"How can he stand erect, when earth  
Is on his back?" another said.

"His hours are profitless and long.  
He ought to have a book down there,"  
One argued. "If he moves his hand  
To take a book, can you declare

Where earth will drop?" a fourth replied.

"This is no tale of fays and elves.  
If earth drops, gentlemen, we drop,  
For we are on the earth ourselves."

They ceased. Portentous on their ears  
As a world's death, as a world's birth,

Up the steep dark the Titan spoke:—  
"And shall I always hold the earth?"

## Russia to the Allies, 1918

YOU that allowed the crumbling Tsardom room,  
Year after year that saw my exiles tread  
By tens of thousands to their living tomb  
In the Siberian waste, and no word said,  
What mighty need has brought your armies now?

You that beheld my surging crowds lack food,  
My peasants' dream of liberty turn gall  
And wormwood of another servitude,  
Yet sate not in the judgment-seat at all,  
What mighty need has brought your armies now?

You that have seen the blood upon the snow  
Of student and of worker, that have seen  
Pogrom, espial, fraud and Cossack-blow  
With never a demand to intervene,  
What mighty need had brought your armies now?

You that afar off watched the abysmal fire  
Of Revolution roll on ended night,  
Deep after deep, the people's dumb desire,  
And veiled your eyes from fierceness of the light,  
What mighty need has brought your armies now?

I cast the sword away. The torch outshone;  
I lifted it against my enemy.  
With the authoritative dead alone

I stood, the hour that you abandoned me.  
What mighty need has brought your armies now?

Evangelists of "Democracy," that fly  
To me, the reaper of man's tragic good,  
Your driven cities left to judge you by,  
And all the past you bore with fortitude,  
What mighty need has brought your armies now?

# Charity

(Austria, 1919)

**B**IND on a defeated nation  
Inescapable starvation.  
Then rush in, see who can be  
Most helpful with humanity.  
It will be plain to thinkers versed  
In proper ratiocination  
You must not hesitate to take  
The first step, for the second's sake.  
How can folk by your care be nursed,  
Unless you cripple them at first?

## At the Sewing Circle

“WALTER is back from France,” said one,  
“And Norman Price, and Lewis Clem;  
But as to what they’ve seen or done,  
You don’t get one word out of them.”  
Ane then another raised her eyes  
That beamed with kindness and surprise.  
“My Harry’s just like that,” she said.  
“They’re all alike,—not say a word.”  
And touching on some other lad  
Too inconsiderate to tell  
The entertainment he had had  
With murder in the bowl of hell,  
The conversation turned to bread.



## To a Condemned Man

PEACE to you as you pass from the electric chair!  
We, your old neighbors, never wished you harm.  
We saw you hook black bass  
Out of Sands Creek, or shin up chestnut trees  
To shake the burrs on bobbing heads below.  
We never thought your deed would bring the town  
Into the paper with the murder news.  
We saw you as we saw the other boys.

Where are you, forest runner? On the lake  
Your brother, still too young  
For taunts of school children to trouble, steers  
His raft to port, the stump where briar nods.  
Where are you, forest runner? Now some hand  
Turns on the current that cuts short your breath.

Somehow you slipped past church and school and home,  
Past all the reasonable nets we boast,  
A forest animal. We saw you, perched  
Upon the trestle framework of the bridge,  
Laughing, the truant officer's white beard  
Perplexed below. No other dared climb there.  
You knew and followed every wood thing's trail,  
But what you knew marched not with ordered ways.  
Murder with Burglary,—and now the end.  
I seem to see you, caught, the worthless coin  
Yet in your hand, all the place thundering  
“Escape,”—and then the gun, laid within reach. . . .

You took life in hot blood and desperate.  
The law takes yours deliberately. Now  
There is an end. Tomorrow's train will bring  
Up the steep grade at noon into the town  
A body in a box for burial,—  
What they have made of you.

Your soul be given a look at hills you loved,  
Remembered from your cell at Ossining!  
May sudden death set free your soul to run  
As once you ran bare-footed through spring rain!  
Peace to you as you pass from the electric chair!  
We, your old neighbors, never wished you harm.

# Life Divided

FOR the means to live,  
For the care-free hour,  
I must bow my neck all day  
To Baal's power,

With pale hundreds packed  
Like cattle in a car  
Rush through the infernal night  
Without one star.

Traitor to my dream,  
With my tongue made mute,  
By my toil I must increase  
Baal's fruit.

I must take his wage  
Till his time be done,—  
The bright penny in the hand,  
The darkening sun.

Day by working day  
With my dream at strife!  
How much longer shall I pay  
Divided life?

## To a Caged Bear

EYES, to see the bars of steel,  
Ears, to hear commands of men  
Put you through a trick or meal,  
Feet, to pace along your den  
And pace the same way back again,  
Strength within captivity,  
How are you different from me?

Break your bars! They will not break.  
Obey or die,—sole choice allowed.  
I wonder will you ever make  
A cheerful citizen and cowed  
In your zoo, O fierce, O proud?  
Strength within captivity,  
How are you different from me?

# Eugene V. Debs

WHEN the winds wake,  
When the floods start,  
I think of him who lives  
In the people's heart.

He who lives there  
Shall never know  
The outcast road  
That exiles go.

He who lives there  
Shall ever be  
Held on that heart  
As a ship on the sea,

On its deep water  
Brave and blest,  
On its dark water  
To take his rest.

When the winds wake,  
When the floods start,  
I think of him who lives  
In the people's heart.

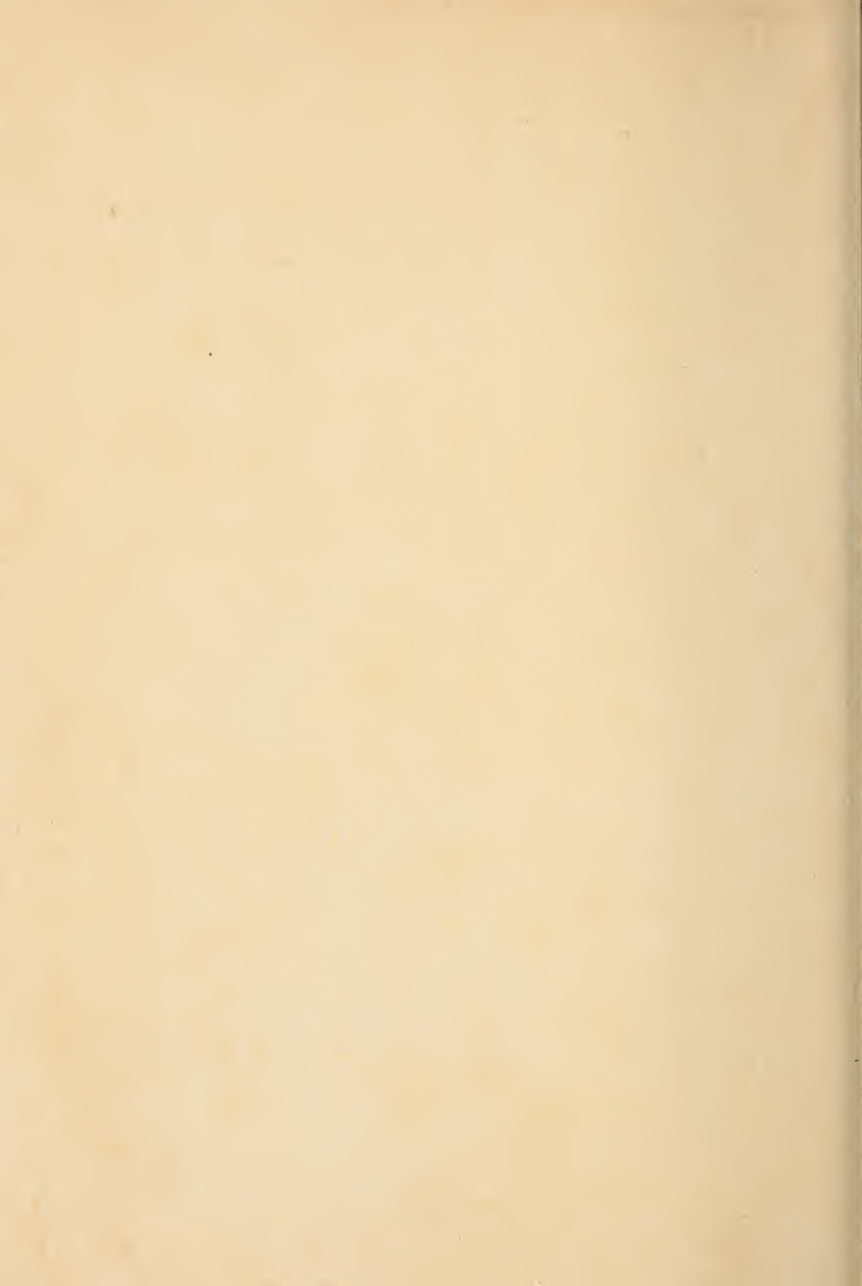
# The Angel of the Record

“THERE is little left to write on the last page of the nations,” said the Angel of the Pen,  
“Writ red with the story of Europe’s desolations, and the holocaust of marching men,  
Writ black with betrayal and graves of little children, and ghouls that go fully fed,  
Ghouls that go fed with the gold of the slaughter, while the workless hordes lack bread.  
There is little left to write,” said the Angel of the Record,  
“ere the last line be writ and read.”

“I am coming to the place where my hand, suspended, waited for the pompous word  
Of the Roman councillors, secure and splendid, before the Gothic tread was heard.  
I am coming to the place where my hand was holden for King Louis’ jesting, when  
The flood that he mocked was already on the upland, and feudal France was drowning then.  
There is little left to write,” said the Angel of the Record,  
“ere I turn the page again.”

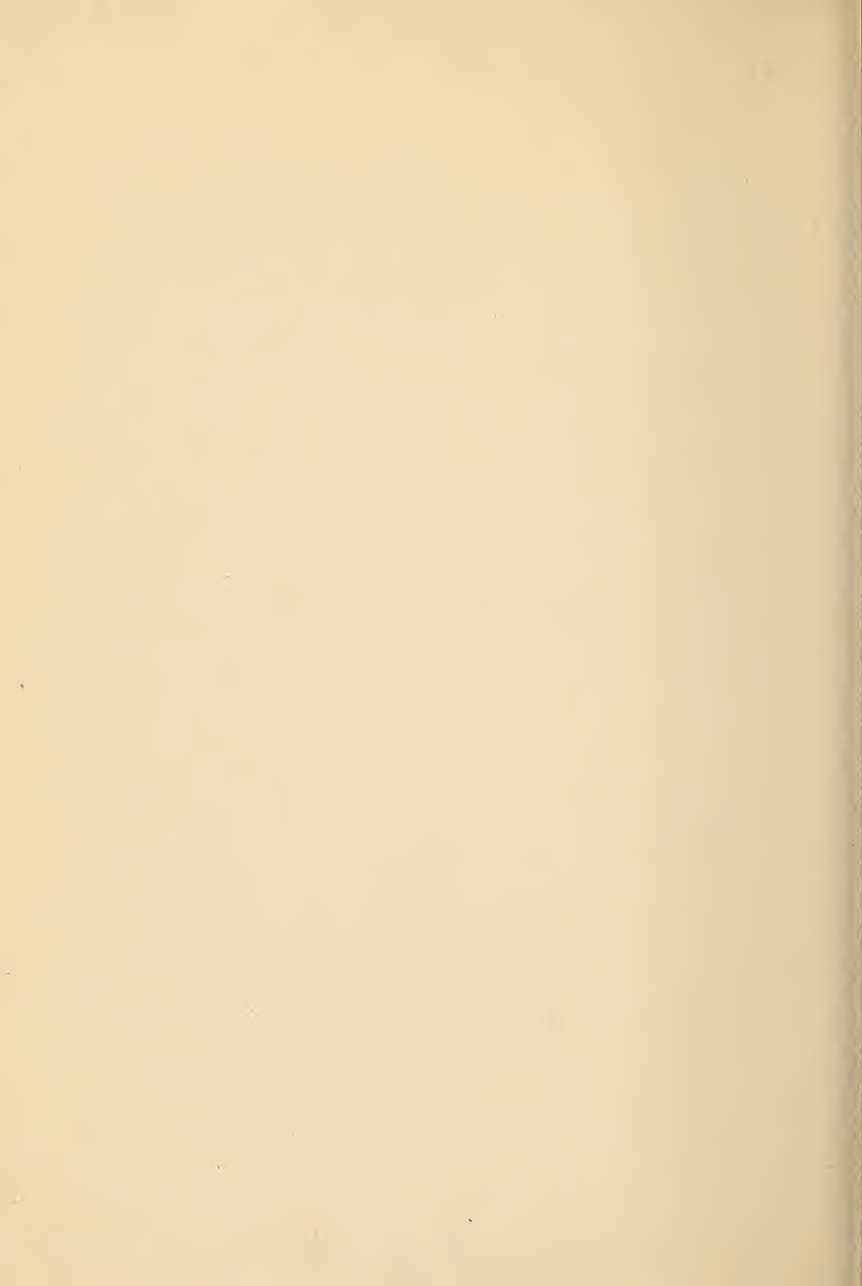
“The sign changeth not for the order that is ending. An ancient house it is,  
Foundations that warp and are ever bending with basal inequalities,

And the groan of the poor, and the death of prophets,  
and the feasting of the few  
Therein,—and a fall, and a space remaining for builders  
that will build more true.  
There is little left to write," said the Angel of the Record.  
"ere I turn the page anew!"





*Out of the East*



# Two Dialogues

---

- I. DIALOGUE IN JERUSALEM      A.D. 33  
II. DIALOGUE IN CALCUTTA      A.D. 1922
- 

## Dialogue in Jerusalem

Milo, middle-aged Roman official

*Time,* A.D. 33

Gorgias, young Greek, his secretary

Critus, his son

*Place,* Garden of a court

CRITUS (*with a yawn*)

Yaar, what a town to be in,—dysentery,  
Ambush, fleas, sunstroke! Our reports must make  
A Roman convict thankful to be thrown  
To lions in a civilized arena.  
If they cure other fellows of the itch  
For foreign travel they do something, though.  
Not a good show nearer than Antioch!

MILO (*absently, head bent over documents*)

Go out and see the temple, if you want  
Excitement. An inrush of countrymen  
Took the court yesterday and hold it still.  
The money-changers in a ring outside  
Howl broken-hearted, and the townspeople,  
Remembering years of cheating, let them howl.  
But if you go, mind you go fully armed.

CRITUS

As if I cared who held the temple. Yaar,  
What difference does it make? O fostering Rome,  
Mother most honorable, queen of the world,  
O for a bath!

*(throws dice perfunctorily)*

What are you reading, Gorgias?

GORGAS *(looking up with a smile)*

Of hoofs and horns. I'm starting a collection  
Of native writing,—hoofs and monstrous horns.

CRITUS *(sleepily)*

Of hoofs and monstrous horns,—what do they mean?

GORGAS *(with mischief)*

Mother most honorable, queen of the world,  
Fostering Rome! Or sometimes, if the seer  
Varies the image, she goes clothed in red,  
A scarlet strumpet, with a cup of blood.

CRITUS *(aroused)*

The deuce! She does indeed! The dirty swine,  
I'd like to cut their throats!

MILO *(looking up)*

It is sedition,

Sedition beyond doubt; but written hate  
Can do small harm. Keep your collection, Gorgias.

If an uprising comes, the evidence—

*(A messenger comes in, whispers to Milo. Exit messenger.)*

MIL0. Gorgias. *(The young Greek drops his reading, comes and stands near Milo.)*

The leader of those countrymen,  
Those Galileans who have stormed the temple,  
Is Jesus; just consult your letters, see  
If a young Galilean by that name  
Raised Jairus' daughter,—or so Jairus wrote.

GORGias *(after opening a number of scrolls finds the right one)*

It is the same name.

MIL0 *(resignedly)* Jupiter, now what  
Possessed him to come here for suicide?  
Crowds of the poor and sick, lepers to cleanse,  
Blockheads to educate, throng Galilee,  
Enough for fifty years of useful toil,—  
The Government would bless it,—why seek out  
Jerusalem, who gives to her mad prophets  
One gift alone through myriad centuries,—  
The silence of the inevitable grave?  
His people of importance solidly  
Opposed this man months past, and yesterday  
The temple lawlessness inflamed their hate.  
Passover seals his doom; at Passover

Some desert spell transforms these tribes to wolves.  
There lies the difference, Gorgias, between  
A civilized faith and a barbarous.  
The more a Roman has, the more urbane  
And tolerant he grows. With natives, though,  
The more they have, the more wolf-like they howl.  
Moreover, if his blood is what they howl for  
We have no choice but to comply, nor risk  
Disorder for so small a cause. I would,—  
For he did Jairus a good turn,—we might  
Prolong his years,—it cannot be; since they,  
The mass of his own people, thirst for blood,  
The people's will it is,—their hides be flayed!

*(Enter a Rabbi, a man of impressive character and dignity. He seems to have cast aside temporarily his hatred for Rome under compulsion of a stronger hatred.)*

RABBI

Your Excellency, I bring for your ears  
News of uprising. A seditionist  
To whom the people throng, intends to make  
Himself the province ruler!

MILO *(coldly)*

Go to Pilate

About it, if it's Jesus that you mean.  
The matter lies out of my jurisdiction.

GORGAS *(leaning forward and speaking with ironic grace)*

I crave your patience, Rabbi, as a hunter

Of truth where she lies hid, to lesson me  
With what you charge this man, since, even though  
His arm should uproot Rome, I deem your spirit  
Might summon strength to bear vicissitude.

RABBI (*with suppressed fury*)

I taught him! My hand guided the child's hand  
In sacred characters. Questions he asked  
I answered, and he sat wide-eyed. Behold  
The fledgling teaching parent birds to fly!  
The same instruction whence he drew his strength  
He tramples on, insults its holy men,  
Calls in the unclean, bars out the chosen ones  
Whose life-long consecration builded truth,  
Profanes the temple,—he has prophesied  
The temple, God's own body, will be torn  
Asunder in three days! Messiah? Madman!

(*turning suddenly to Milo*)

I beg, my lord, the eagle of your power  
To film its eye for three days' space. Ourselves  
With our own hands will do God's holy will  
And trap this render, this blasphemer, this —

MILO (*indifferently*)

In Pilate's jurisdiction, as before  
I told you. Go. I will not interfere.  
Do you suppose Rome has no better use

For golden hours than to inspect your broils?  
Make silence your ally,—as trappers wont.

*(the Rabbi bows and goes out)*

GORGias (*sighing*)

That means they go to snare him bestially  
Who holds his own in open dialectic  
Most brave. I heard him with the Saducees,  
Who learned from Greece there was no resurrection—

MILO (*heartily*)

I'm glad to hear it, Gorgias. Any piece  
Of information that we can impart  
Is a plain duty. Keep your balance, lad.  
A thousand rot this day of pestilence  
Round Carthage, and ten thousand choke the plains  
Of insurrectionary Gaul. Waste not  
Care on one youth, who panted for his death  
When he came hither. How should Rome be blamed?  
His teacher may perchance have spoken truth.  
He may indeed be flaming against Rome,  
Poor wandering marsh-light, quenched before the  
dawn!

Our lists must be checked, Gorgias. Herein lies  
Enough awry to occupy your care,—  
Vineyards of Engedi the hail has wrecked,  
The fruits that Kedron sends down scantily,—  
One must go thither to inspect the tale  
Of those reluctant fruits,—the timber meant



For Caesarea still on Lebanon  
With not a driver nor a vehicle,—  
And forests do not move,—the road washed out  
By freshets pouring this side Jericho.

*(having handed work over to Gorgias leans back  
reflectively)*

My Gorgias, in dim corners of the land  
Where hate and wonder and wild prophecy  
Fail faster than the winds that herald them,  
Remember what abides; remember Rome.  
The generations look thereon,—and die.  
Ten thousand sunsets look thereon,—and die.  
With the eternal river for her glass  
She gazes on her counterpart alone.  
Keep your proportion, Gorgias. All things die,  
Enthroned Rome remains. What is she not?  
Conqueror whose field of honor is the earth,  
Harpist whose strings are old and awful tribes,  
Wizard whose touch turns chaos into law,  
She rules, a living will, her world of ghosts.

CRITUS *(gazing through court, unimpressed by his father's  
eloquence)*

Come over here, quick, Gorgias, and look out!  
Come see a pretty woman finally,—  
At least what you can see of her. The veil  
Hides the moon's face,—barbarous custom that.  
Hurry up, Gorgias, or she'll be gone!

# Dialogue in Calcutta

Rawlins, English importer

John Spark, young journalist

Miss Edith Adams, missionary

*Place,* inner office of importing house

*Time,* March 11, 1922

RAWLINS (*at desk, glancing over newspaper impatiently*).

H'm. Nothing new. (*After turning it inside out*).

Nothing happened.

SPARK (*an alert young Englishman, stands in doorway watching Rawlins dig his way into cablegrams and letters. Rawlins looks up as he reaches the bottom of the pile, meets his eye.*)

I got by your office force this far.

RAWLINS (*heartily*) Come in, Spark. (*brushing pile aside*).

I was wanting to talk to a human being. Anything happened? I've been stuck here all day.

SPARK (*shakes his head*). Everything has been so quiet since the arrest it doesn't look natural. The people seem sort of apathetic. I suppose Gandhi's saying that the trial was fair has something to do with it.

RAWLINS (*chuckling*.) Almost thanked the court for sentence, eh? Queer chap.

SPARK. Do you ever see "Young India," Mr. Rawlins?

RAWLINS. No, 'course not.

SPARK. I picked up a copy of it not long ago. Mohandas Gandhi wrote in that, "Blood will be shed, but let it be said that it was our blood." Do you know, sir, (*taking a chair and resting elbows solemnly on desk*) I think the Government has made a mistake.

RAWLINS. The Government? Oh, no.

SPARK. I mean, we've handed the non-cooperators what they were looking for,—blood-shed, suppression and imprisonment. It's a dangerous movement, you say. Of course it is, but suppose we'd paid no attention to it; suppose we'd ignored them when they were playing for martyrdom. Wouldn't that have made them look foolish? As is it, they're sweeping the country,—Lahore, Bombay, Ahmedabad,—

RAWLINS (*impatiently*.) That's all right, but you can't ignore sedition. Look at the Prince of Wales! That's a fine way of treating royalty! They went into mourning, the dirty beggars! They turned their backs; they barred their doors; the Prince rode through five miles of deserted street at Allababad! And for no reason —

SPARK (*ironically*.) A mere matter of 1800 leaders arrested in Allababad alone.

RAWLINS (*continuing*.) These people aren't fit for self-government, Spark. They need guidance and education, as the best of 'em realize. Look at their sanitation,—I mean their lack of it. Look at their

superstition. Why, at Amritzar, I'm told, they thought Gandhi would turn their sticks into fire-arms —

SPARK (*with sudden gravity*). We've nothing to boast of about Amritzar. (*A pause*). The reason I object to their rebellion, though,—it's not constructive. Taking it by and large, what can they offer against the Empire? Look at the difference in vision. It's almost ludicrous. They think in terms of domestic walls, of village life at most; the Empire thinks in terms of seas, cities, trunk lines and continents. (*musingly*). I can see them all over the world,—the little brown houses and elemental excitements and buzzing little religions. What are they worth in themselves? Nothing whatever. The Empire takes each one, gives it its place in the whole, and from a lot of ephemeral parts you get a vital, abiding unity. Only a godlike genius can do that sort of thing.

RAWLINS (*lost in his own thought*). And look at what the movement does to trade! Do you like to see our good cloth going up in smoke, eh? We'll be ruined if these confounded spinning wheels keep on. Gandhi must have gone crazy all of a sudden, and the whole country with him. What got into him, anyway? Kept his head during the Boer scrimmage, all the head you'd expect a non-resistant to have, I mean; organized an ambulance corps, and an effective one. Kept his head during the War, too.

When our troops began arriving at the French front in 1914, there was Gandhi with his ambulance corps. Later on he came back to Bombay and preached about the caste system, taught the natives the value of education, loyalty, kindness, industry, that sort of thing. Fine! Why couldn't he have kept it up? Great help to the Government. But then he has to go and think (*Rawlins sighs deeply*),—and think about the Government; and pretty soon he thinks himself and his country into a lot of trouble. He's an extremist, that's the matter with him.

SPARK (*mischievously*). Ghandhi and his country aren't the only ones in a lot of trouble. Not to get personal about it, there's Montagu, he's out all right, and Reading to follow him out most likely. The "law and order" crowd are baying for something definite.

RAWLINS. I suppose Derby will come in,—

SPARK. Bonar Law, I should think. (*Both men remain silent, staring in front of them, viewing London politics.*)

RAWLINS (*thoughtfully*). We're a long way from the center of things, John.

(*Enter Miss Edith Adams, a missionary about 40 years of age, cheerful, genuine and efficient. Both men rise. Miss Adams, greeting them,*)

MISS ADAMS. I can only stay five minutes, Mr. Rawlins. Good afternoon, Mr. Spark. I'm on my way to the

hospital, but since I was bound directly past your office I thought I would be postman and bring you Abdullah's letter of thanks for the school supplies. You never saw a happier child.

RAWLINS (*reading delightedly*). Fine! Look at that, Spark. It's better than your English any day. You're doing a great work with these people, Miss Adams. I never knew people needed it worse.

MISS ADAMS. They have wonderful possibilities when they can overcome their ignorance and superstition. (*sighs*). One of my boys told me a legend of the Mahatmah the other day,—the Government sending an officer to kill him, the officer seeing a hundred-headed figure which he struck at with his sword and succeeded only in striking off his own head.

RAWLINS. Bah! They'd rather have a hundred-headed figure than a real man!

SPARK (*whimsically*). They follow the real man, though. They merely give him a hundred heads to honor him. As for us, we present him with a convict cell. We'd rather have a unified Government than a real man,—and I think we're right. We all have our preferences.

RAWLINS (*turning to Miss Adams a little anxiously*). You missionaries don't feel that we're a "satanic Government," do you, Miss Adams?



MISS ADAMS (*smiling*). Hardly. Satan would never help us with our hospitals and schools. They are not in his line at all. And politics are not in our line at all. We are here to aid the people toward better living and to give them a knowledge of Christ.

RAWLINS. So you're not starting spinning wheels?

MISS ADMAS. Oh, no.

RAWLINS (*relieved, naively*). I hoped you would feel that way.

MISS ADAMS. Did you doubt it?

RAWLINS. Well, I thought you might think miracles and "persecution" and that sort of thing — (*stops, rather confused*). I thought you might think Gandhi was a — a holy man —

MISS ADAMS. No one would deny his being a holy man in many respects. But I at least feel that his aim is mistaken. These people are not ready for self-government,— an overturn would only mean their exploitation by their own corrupt Indian officials. Besides that, I consider Gandhi's support of Mohammedanism unworthy. It would ill become a follower of our Lord, Mr. Rawlins, to forget His work for a political movement. His Kingdom is not of this world. And, as I've already said, our activities are so far from politics,—with the sick and the old and the children and the needy, that such things are hardly more than words to us.

RAWLINS. That's the right attitude. Work like yours is fundamental, Miss Adams. I shall look in on you Sunday if I may, in time for the children's prayer service. (*Shaking hands heartily and watching her down the road as she departs*). That's a fine school of hers, John, a fine school. An inspiration. Are you headed for the club?

(*Spark nods*). I'll come along. (*The two leave the office together, and start once more on politics*).

RAWLINS. Do you think our Welsh wizard is going to land right side up again this time?



## The Chinese Dragon Soliloquizes

I HAD a coat, embroidered, in dull gold,  
With sacred letters, linking moon and star;  
With cedars, where the cliff gave little hold;  
With mandarin and roll and scimitar.  
Thereon the pious son stood glorified,  
The furnace burned with ghostly alchemy,  
The river reeds made poetry of their pride,  
The river, jagged as lightning, found the sea.

My new coat comes, monotonously gray,  
With flume and chimney stamped thereon in black;  
Black throngs beneath the bulk of cannon sway.  
It would be rude of me to send it back.  
Coats are but coats; above its rags, I trust,  
I shall be blinking on the sun-hot dust.



*The Changing Order*



## Russia, 1918

MY love walks under bitter skies,  
And few there are to call her fair;  
There is presaging in her eyes,  
And there is blood upon her hair.

The others can appraise their fate  
In gold or trade or victory won.  
She has a pilgrimage too great  
For any gift on earth to crown.

Past graves of her own children she  
Seeks universal peace for men.  
Past her unended agony  
She seeks world brotherhood again.

And may I go with her on quest,  
With her through hail and whirling snow,  
To find not hostelry nor rest,  
Only the insult she will know,—

Her tears upon my face, her dread  
Half-uttered word to set me free,  
Her hungering to give me bread,  
Her homelessness to shelter me!

Dreamer invincible she goes,  
And where her feet have trod I seem

To see creation that uprose  
To meet the courage of her dream.

My love walks under bitter skies,  
And few there are to call her fair;  
There is presaging in her eyes,  
And there is blood upon her hair.

# Russia

THERE is a nation whose far destiny  
Is written on the slopes of evergreen,  
On Ural mountain and on sun-hot plain,  
On hoary tundra and on gleaming mine,  
And on the Arctic ocean, that embeds  
In aeon-piled ice the mastodon —  
A nation that shall serve infinitude  
Forever; silences and holy men  
And deeds of terror are its offering.

The land is set between the east and west.  
The act of Europe and the Asian dream  
Must here find reconciliation. East and west  
Age after age in its fierce heart contend,  
With tumult and with splendor and with wrong.  
There is no other nation that must bear  
The battle of the irreconcilable;  
There is no other nation with a birth  
Ancient as wandering of Tartar hordes,  
New as the wild mare's plunge in thawing stream.  
The mystery enfolds me of her youth  
And of her age. I think the jealous god  
Whose tears are everlasting fire laid  
This one in trance, with fields of dazzling snow  
For barrier, one thousand years; and there  
The winds bore drift of dim and swathing creeds  
And peacock-wingèd court and harvest toil,  
And strife and vain invasion and slow wrath,

Until one destined hour the Revolution  
Rose, as the sun, to wake her. She came forth,  
A child unchangeably, yet with the spell  
Of centuries upon her; she came forth  
To find world brotherhood. Ironic fate  
Led through fraternal slaughter,—and she looked  
Celestially for peace, and there appeared  
No visible weapon but the avenging sword.  
Her ways of pilgrimage begin. No path  
Of travail known to man, but her young feet  
Shall tread thereon. From civil battle-ground  
And factory and famine-wasted town  
And altar and green field she must bear sign  
And symbol of the experience of man  
Till all are visited, all relics brought  
Unto a secret place, when, kneeling down,  
She shall invoke the fire of heaven thereon.  
The fire of heaven, kindling them, will draw  
Unto her all the lowly of the earth,  
And stars, beholding, one by one shall stoop  
To warm their hands at her immortal flame.



# The Russian Revolution

## PART I.

### PREMATURE REVOLUTION

1905-6

#### PEASANTS

Is it the earth, our mother,  
Gives stone for bread?  
No — by the will of another  
The land lies dead.  
The horse and the plow are taken  
For taxes' yield,  
The strength of our sons is shaken  
On the foreign field.  
Always we labor, keeping  
Watch on earth's heart,  
Always from hoped-for reaping  
We are held apart.

#### WORKMEN

Our wretchedness is one,  
Crowded in barracks where a man's hopes rot,  
Driven like beasts of toil, though we have not  
The brute's release from toil when sun goes down.  
Our wretchedness is one,  
Bound in one iron tether.  
Now let our cause be one.  
Let us all march together,  
To tell the Father Tsar what we endure,  
To beg him make our human right secure.

THE SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

I seem to have less influence on this mad  
But active planet than the maddest dream.  
Their Little Father even now prepares  
The Palace guns against petitioning,  
Ere he remove his sacred person thence.

BLOODY SUNDAY

Under the all-beholding sun,  
Moves a rapt processional  
With solemn banners and with chant reiterate.  
The priest Gapon leads them on.  
And now they pass the Winter Palace gate  
Where murder hides in state.  
The sudden volleys fall  
Into the unarmed crowd that tries, too late,  
To flee and to escape. The self-same death  
That turns white snow to red  
Wakes in the workers with relentless breath  
The dread god slumbering there.  
No more they will be led,  
No more to government implore and kneel.  
Within themselves they feel  
The strength by which they shall endure and dare.

BUREAUCRATS

Though bombs remove Bobrikoff and Von Plehve  
And Sergius to the more ordered realm  
Administered by the Omnipotent,

Though we pay more in treasure and in blood  
For the annihilation of our arms\*  
Than others pay for victory, let us hope.  
The revolutionists are with us still.  
Torture and pogrom, knouting and arrest,  
Stripping and flogging schoolboy and schoolgirl  
For liberal opinion may continue  
Beneath Witte's sway, with the accompaniments  
Espionage, speech-twisting, letter-opening,  
Where a man's daily acts become his trail,  
By which we hunt the quarry unto death.

#### WORKMEN

Our power manifest  
That links the east and west,  
Our power, diffused in wealth and heat and light,  
Ever leaves us more driven and dispossessed.  
Now let it draw within its slumberous might,  
And fold its arms, and rest.  
Now let us watch east sundering from west,  
And watch when motion and when light have ceased  
Impassively, until  
Earth is left barren by our ebbing will.

#### GENERAL STRIKE

Lights disappear in cities; fires flare out;  
Factory wheels are fixed; shops stare blank-eyed  
On railways of the Empire paralyzed.  
Judges no longer judge, nor lawyers plead;

\*in the Russo-Japanese War

Teachers and clerks flood out the vast inertia.  
No mails arrive; no messages can pass  
The riven wires. The vague multitude  
Waits formlessly, as though the god whose breath  
Exhaled light, swiftmess and the gorgeous towns,  
Repenting his creation, wholly drew  
His breath back to his being, and the light,  
And gorgeous towns, and swiftmess, wholly ceased.  
Only the students, flashing eagerly,  
Torches of change, along the darkened streets,  
Summon the crowds to unaccustomed halls  
And there instruct them, silent, strangely waiting—

#### OCTOBER MANIFESTO

Over the breathless chaos sounds a word.  
Is it the word we have awaited long?  
Within the Tsar's own promise is averred  
Freedom of body and of speech, and wrong  
Ended,—the Duma finally in sight.  
Dare we believe that wind of spring has stirred  
From out the bitter night?  
If this be madness let us go mad then,  
Under the red flag meet and cheer and kiss,  
And look not down, lest the unchanged abyss  
Yawn at our feet again!

#### THE SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

The wind of spring, devoted dreamers? Spring  
Followed by searing summer and red fall,  
And winter, frozen on the frozen grave.

Even now, if but you listen, you can hear  
The shrieks of massacre,—pogroms again  
In Kieff and in Warsaw, peculiar fruit  
Of Government repentance. (*Exit*)

#### BUREAUCRATS

We have crammed them full with words,—now for  
the deed.

Let priests stir up the drunken populace  
To slaughter Jew and intellectual.  
Let prison close on labor leader, student,  
Editor, all that stir the brew of thought,—  
The doors of night swing wide enough for all.  
Fling the police about the people's meetings,  
Greet them, emerging, with the knout or whip.  
Bombard the most obstreperous committee.  
Show the rejoicing fools that, every path  
Of lawful change blockaded, their sole hope  
Rests upon violence. Let Revolution  
Be brought forth prematurely by our hand,  
That it may prematurely die. When law  
Has quelled the anarchy, we may appeal,  
Civilization's champions, abroad,  
For gold, to bolster up the tottering throne.

#### PEASANTS

Over the death-white scene,  
Through woods of birch and woods of evergreen  
The sledges throng.  
Woe for the landlord's dwelling!

The roaring flames unto the sky are telling  
An end of patient sufferance of wrong.

#### CITY REVOLUTIONISTS

Words are but wind from hell or heaven,  
Small aid against torment and prison cell.  
Reaction rolls, more black, more horrible  
For respite given,  
Upon the weary land.  
Is it in vain the whole strife has been striven?  
Shall no one raise up an avenging hand?  
The strikers must be forced back soon, unless  
The strike and Revolution can unite,  
And both together smite  
Terror, that only terror can redress.  
It is no time to balance words, to bow  
With long-since-proven vain petitioning.  
The hour lifts up the torch, a signalling  
To us, that we rise now.

#### SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

I must congratulate myself that I  
Do not ride horseback, like an officer.  
These wire entanglements and barricades,  
Set tortuous through the city, might surprise  
The fiercest galloper; and when my mount  
Had flung me, it would be small consolation  
That my last vision was the red flag, waved  
Over a barricade. Suppose I stay —  
Since earth will never hear me I can stalk

Unscathed through danger manifold — and sum  
The powers the Revolution has opposed.  
On one side, wire entanglement, as before  
Said, on the other, baffled cavalry.  
On one side ill-fed students, boys and girls,  
The Tsar's resplendent armies fronting them.  
Revolver against case shot and shrapnel,  
Machine gun and percussion bomb. I must  
Commend from my invisible recess  
The Government's complete democracy  
In shooting,— here a cook and there a clerk,  
A housewife, doctor, or a bystander,  
Or foreign correspondent; buildings have  
More casualties than the combatants,  
Save the church tower of the Strestnoi, where  
His sharpshooters rain down upon the crowd  
The Tsar's most holy will, in wounding death.  
I need no more delay. The youngsters make  
A splendid gesture in the teeth of doom. (Exit).

#### BUREAUCRATS

The prisoners one by one fall to our hand,  
The barricades are hewn down. Law and order  
Resume. The bodies, bayoneted, shot,  
On sledges heaped for general burial,  
No more make insurrection. Now we turn  
Attention to the peasant. Scourge and shoot,  
Burn down his home about his lawless head,  
In punitive forays! We hope to make  
With mark of blood some impress on a mind



Unprintable as ocean otherwise.  
Workers began the anarchy, and workers  
Now hold the last redoubt. Ten thousand hold  
The Presna hills. The fashionable guard  
Flinging a cordon round the district, train  
Their battery on flimsy cottages  
That, taking fire, burn the inhabitants  
Within, while those escaping are shot down  
Along the river bank. The jails are crammed.  
Torture relieves Monotony of guard  
At times therein. More prisoners must be  
Dispatched with noose or gun,—the easier fate,—  
The rest exiled, where madness will pursue  
Its victims through barbaric solitude.  
Again the land lies quiet. We may turn  
To Europe's powers now with our request.

#### REVOLUTIONISTS

Child of our blood and of our sacrifice  
Is born the Duma, in young hardihood.  
Within the Winter Palace, that has stood,  
Unmoved, the tyrant's pomp and people's cries,  
Gather our representatives, to save  
The state that lowly lies.  
The prisoners across the Neva wave  
From cells a greeting to the future years.  
But little of our toil or triumphing  
Is that which to the despot's eye appears,  
Blind to the streams that, moving underground  
In darkness, without sound,



Join other streams upon their sunless way,  
Until the flood burst forth in open day.  
Though our lives end in exile and in cell,  
Though fate our children's lot may not assuage,  
Binding with force well-nigh intolerable  
Upon their youth the self-same heritage,  
We know and we proclaim that all is well.  
Against its will, winter must bring forth spring.

#### BUREAUCRATS

France, Germany and England grant our loans;  
Civilization thus repays her debt  
To us, for promptness in upholding law.  
The tottering throne may now be stabilized.  
The gold we shall be competent to pour  
Like molten gold of legend, down the throat  
Of the bold Duma, grown too eloquent,  
Choking its breath. Our unchanged armory  
Of methods, crude and terrible perhaps,  
Against a people terrible and crude,  
We shall employ, their worth proved once again:—  
No unions countenanced; espionage,  
Drink, ignorance and chastisement our aids.  
To each aspiring patriot shall be given  
Torment of knowing, to the subtlest point,  
What must be done, without the means to act,  
Till spirit, frozen, dies, and we abide  
Quiet as winter on a quiet grave.

## INTERLUDE

1910

ONE BUREAUCRAT TO ANOTHER

Night-flitter, you upon the dreamer's chest  
Sucking the slow-drawn breath, what of the night?

BUREAUCRAT

The dreaming nation merely moans in sleep.  
Snow falls — snow falls — the numbing snow —

1914

ONE BUREAUCRAT TO ANOTHER

What of the night?

BUREAUCRAT

I scarcely know. I think  
The nation stirs. Can any waking  
Be possible, after so long a sleep?  
Wizards of darkness, we must summon forth  
A dream more terrible than any past,  
Of deeper thralldom and of deadlier spell,  
Half-shaped already out of secret hate,  
To hold her from awakening — World War —  
Whence, dreaming, she may pass from sleep to death.

1914-17

*(With increasing disquietude)*

Is this the dream we summoned? Mightier thought  
Than our thought, overbearing our thought, wrests  
The dream from our control, shapes it at will —

## PART II.

### POLITICAL REVOLUTION

MARCH, 1917

#### BUREAUCRATS

We do not trust the fumes that this World War,  
Stark feet upon the earth, is spurting forth.  
From soldiers, charging, armed with rake or stick  
Against artillery; from armies, trapped  
In the Masurian marsh, where crushed men made  
A living road for gun wagons else mired  
To cross on, and munitions never came,  
Sidetracked some hundred miles behind the line  
By certain landowners who took the train,  
A sentiment arises that can bode  
Small good to us. The War has gone too far,  
Autocracy against autocracy.  
Most true that military secrets can  
Slip through to Prussia, as Sukhomlinoff  
Proves, that appropriations for the War  
In civil pockets nestle downily,  
That bribes to keep the army, unprepared  
Are wasted not,— yet it has gone too far.  
The ancient Cossack force, the throne's watch dog,  
Is in its grave; the new force, by the hand  
Of Zemstvos fed, looks warily on us.  
The nobles fall away. Rasputin's corpse  
Bears witness to their keen, confederate swords.

One way remains to end domestic strife  
And foreign conflict at the self-same stroke.  
Let Protopopoff (blessed by the Dark Monk  
Whose spirit in the palace hisses intrigue  
Still for our solace), make the people rise.  
Store up the food, let hunger pinch the towns,  
Muzzle the press, stir up the factory hands,  
Set peasant against Jew, give the police  
Machine guns, to cut down the restless mobs.  
The Allies will release us from our pledge  
For strife within the border; we can bring  
The army from the front, by the same move  
Abandoning a war too perilous  
And drowning discontent at home in blood.

#### SOLDIERS

Why must we stand, knee-deep in filth and mire,  
Waiting some petty tyrant's word to fire,  
While the days meant for plowing fields go by  
O'er us, that know not why we fight or die?

#### INTELLIGENZIA

Our mind is set on victory; on us rests  
Responsibility the Government  
Disowns,—relief, hospital, clothing, food,  
Care for the peasant, and at every turn  
The Government betrays us — for how long?

#### PEASANT

The earth is mine.  
The same sun makes us shine.  
The same rain turns us black.  
Where I have bent my back,  
Where the furrows go,  
The earth is mine.  
The good Lord willed it so.  
He ought to know.

#### CITY PEOPLE

We wait in queues till sunset dies and bitter night  
comes on,  
In queues beneath exhausted dawn and the cold  
noonday sun,  
For what has failed ere the line's end to this,—  
Promise — and nothingness! Are we such fools?  
We shall not wait forever. Hunger rules.  
Break the shopwindows! Take what food there is!

#### BUREAUCRATS

Well played so far. The people cry for bread,  
Workers are pouring out of factories.  
Now to dissolve the Duma, and to place  
The city under martial law. The same  
Ingredients to hand as twelve years past,  
The same brew shall abominably boil,  
For rebels to drink deep of desolation.

SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

"The same ingredients?" Examine well,  
My savage cook! I squander breath; I pass. (Exit)

PEOPLE

The hour is come. Out to the street! As well  
To die on Cossack's and on soldiers' sword  
As of starvation! Out into the street!

INTELLIGENZIA

The hour is come! Students stream forth, and blend  
With the dark crowd that, like men called from sleep  
By a command too wild to comprehend,  
Too mighty to resist, is gathering,  
And moving onward — now it pauses — now  
It moves — it slowly moves —

BUREAUCRATS

The world tips upside down. Dissolve the Duma?  
The Duma will not be dissolved. The Cossacks  
Wave whips in empty air, guide harmlessly  
Their horses through the vast and cheering crowds.  
The maddest dream of revolutionists,  
Who paid their lives for it twelve years ago,  
Embodied rides the street of Petersburg.  
The Cossacks and the people fraternize!  
The soldiers mustered out refuse to charge.  
Officers ordering otherwise are shot.  
The leaderless Volynski Regiment

Goes over to the people. Now the Guards  
On whom we reckoned — now the regiment  
Sent to suppress the Guards. The Kronstadt fleet  
Has joined the Revolution. Like a river  
Rolling in flood it bears our forces down,  
Save the police, that climb above it still  
And from the housetops scatter furtive death.  
And now the mob, army and people, move  
Onward. They overcome the guards, they seize  
The Arsenal. And now there comes a shout  
As at the Resurrection when friends meet  
And death is past. The crowd has forced the jails.  
The Peter and Paul Fortress slowly swings  
Open. The prisoners, yet dazed, come forth.  
They take the Schluesselburg. The archives flame,  
(Some ancient secrets going safe in air).  
The headlong motor lorries and red flags  
And fire are garments of a world consumed,  
Our world consumed. Till it rise, phoenix-like,  
As well may chance, it will be feasible  
For us to vanish quietly awhile.

#### REVOLUTIONISTS

Can it be possible? Can victory  
Be won, at so small cost of strife and blood?  
We thought the rising tide would beat against  
An Empire carved in rock-strong cruelty.  
At the first impact of the advancing wave  
The structure crashes, hollowed out within,  
Crumbling to nothingness before our eyes.



The people rule. The students in the throng  
Keep order, since the brute police are slain.  
They pour provocateur wine down the street.  
One after one, like gray rats from their holes,  
The leaders of reaction crawl, to give  
Themselves unto the mercy of that power  
They starved and hounded, tortured and denied,  
Sukhomlinov the traitor last. Kerensky,  
Flinging himself between him and the crowd  
That clamors for his life, begs Revolution  
To take no stain of ancient evil past.  
The Tsar, weak shadow of departed wrong,  
Without note vanishes, the people's will  
Sweeping the Duma on to a republic.  
Now soon a thrilling sound is audible,—  
Ten thousand sledges racing over snow,  
Before the ice melts, into Russian land.  
Out of Siberia the exiles rush  
To the fulfillment that redeems lost years.  
Voices are loosed as though Babel had found  
One speech, and that speech liberty.

#### SPIRIT OF REVOLUTION

Brother, again the Word,  
The holiest thing on earth, is heard,  
Free as a bird in ecstasy.  
The troops that bore the tyrant yoke,  
The crowds that knew the Cossack stroke,  
Are locked in one fraternity.  
Christian and Jew alike unbind



The night-forged fetters of the mind,  
Oppressor and oppressed are gone  
In the glory of the sun.  
For we have found at last the thing  
That set creation travailling,  
And its name is liberty.  
Brother, is there an evil done  
Unto your mother or your child?  
I name them even as my own.  
Islanded in the flood of War,  
The whirlpool sounds unreal and far;  
And near the dawn, that laughs in sacred mirth,  
Before it spread abroad, to kindle all the earth!

SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

If the Word, children, turns stone into bread,  
Ice into fuel, nothing into trains,  
It will indeed merit your utmost praise. (Exit).

### UPON THE FIELD OF MARS

Remember those who died before the dawn,  
The generation after generation  
Who aimed their blows against enthronèd wrong  
And, failing, trod the road of desolation,  
Faltering not.  
Remember them in terror and in truth,  
The guerdon of their youth  
Assault and madness, torment, suicide.

Their latest breath was drawn  
Before a hint of light was on the skies.  
They died in darkness, and their eager eyes  
Saw vermin-blotted walls, and dead that did not rise.  
Remember them! They conquered though they died.  
When all on earth was dark  
They wrested from gods' wrath the living spark,  
Consigning it in danger and disguise  
Unto the toiler,—in his care it lies,  
The sky-born flame leaps up the sky in light.  
They paid with more than mortal agonies  
For a defiance that is infinite.  
Upon the Field of Mars commemorate  
Not those alone who fell when final pride  
Of Revolution made them justified,  
But all that named its name to hopeless fate.  
Remember those who died before the dawn!

ONE PEASANT TO ANOTHER (*in a remote village*)

We are free, neighbor. Do you hear, neighbor,  
We are free!  
All of God's creatures.  
Now let us loose the fish,  
Last night's catch, from the seine.  
The freedom comes for all.  
The land is ours, at last.  
Why does the city not send word to us  
The land is ours, at last?

## SOLDIERS

Why must we, doomed alone,  
When all the land rejoices in new birth,  
Starve, or be slaughtered, in our trench forgotten?  
Why obey longer? Are our officers  
Not now our equals? We no more salute.  
I see the soil that needs us, and I see  
The waiting eyes of horses. Even now  
The folk divide the land while we die here.  
Peace, peace! Too long in coming!

## KERENSKY

Am I an alchemist, that I can make  
Triumphant metal out of opposites?  
The Worker's Council and the Duma draw  
Ever more wide apart. Each one desires  
What most the other loathes. How reconcile  
Demands for peace and war, the recompense  
To landlords with the peasant clamoring  
For ownership without a compromise?  
Between the extremist and the moderate  
Lies quaking ground that slowly splits asunder  
And there yawns the abyss. I give day, night,  
Health and security to fill it; soon  
It will close grimly over my own head.  
Meanwhile the soldiers chafe, the extremists shake  
Popular confidence, the Allies keep  
The silence of the grave upon their aims,  
The German agents wag tongue undeterred.

How check disintegration? Gag the press,  
Prevent discussion, ban the Bolsheviki  
As traitors to the state, refill the jails,  
String up the counter-revolutionists?  
The Revolution duplicates the Tsar!  
Never! As soon as freedom is outcast,  
Tyranny dons the hollow mask of law.  
Let it be said we honored liberty!

SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

Another obstacle occurs to me  
That I'll not mention to a Government  
Sufficiently provisional, harassed  
Sufficiently already. Prison bars  
And solitary cell are not, perhaps,  
The best of schools for solidarity.  
Inevitable unison, the pull  
As one force, all together, can alone  
Shove out their ship of state from rocky shoals,—  
One certain, driving, elemental power. . . . (Exit)

PEASANTS

When shall we have the land? Will city folk  
Never cease wrangling? We shall keep our grain  
Till they come to their senses. Why should we,  
Laboring from dawn to dark, give of our toil,  
While clothing and machines that are our due  
Come not from them, while city workers stand  
Idle in city streets — and talk — and talk?

## WORKERS

The Revolution fails if master hands  
Reach in, to steal our labor, as of old.  
Give us the factories, the mines, the mills!

## SOLDIERS

Time that we left the trenches, and came home!

## INTELLIGENZIA

Is honor nothing then? Shall Russia's pledge  
To Russia's hard-pressed Allies be forgotten?  
Fight the War through to victory! You save  
The Revolution hourly from the trench.  
Your sisters join you. Death's Battalion forms.

## SOLDIERS

Where is dishonor if we break a pledge  
Made by another? Our oppressor pledged  
Our blood to Europe's rulers graciously,  
Who pledged their people's blood in turn; the Tsar  
Is gone, and the Tsar's war should follow him.  
Why, if the allied aims bear openness,  
Do they keep silence utter as the grave?  
And the Commission from America,  
From a free land to its free sister, what  
Does this, the Root of privilege, portend?  
We shall not give our lives for rich men's gain.  
We ask a peace without indemnity  
And without annexation, signed by all.

KERENSKY

Now in the darkness each one seeks his own.  
The Korniloff uprising, though it passed,  
A thing of air, yet left the air distraught.  
Smolney dispersed it, and now Smolney holds  
Power supreme. 'The troops' offensive failed  
Down all the line. The July insurrection  
In scattered foam reflects the wave behind  
About to break. Riga is fallen. You  
That heave and mutter like an angry sea,  
Have patience with your Government awhile!

SOLDIERS:

It has not given us peace.

PEASANTS:

It has not given us land.

WORKERS:

It has not given us bread. In hungry queues  
We shiver nightly. Let the armored tanks  
That rode to victory once, ride forth again,  
To make an end of words!

SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

Something is rising. By the law that makes  
The deep to move,  
Naked and elemental as the tide  
It beats the rock, until the rock gives way.

SOLDIERS	{	Peace, land and bread.
PEASANTS		Peace, land and bread.
WORKERS		Peace, land and bread.
		All Power to the Soviet!

## PART III.

### ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

NOVEMBER, 1917

---

#### *SPIRIT of REVOLUTION*

*The rich and the proud shall break, and the old  
shall die,  
The toiler shall rule the towns with a chastening  
rod,  
The scythe and the hammer shall rise up and  
glorify,  
And the child be God!*

---

#### BOLSHEVIKS

The Smolney is an arsenal; the fleet  
Justifies change; the Red Guards hold the town;  
The tanks ride forth again; out in the bay  
A cruiser shells the Winter Palace, where  
The government waits speedy overthrow.  
The Winter Palace is surrendering.  
The Woman's Death Battalion, grounding arms,  
Abandons futile guard. One after one  
Kerensky's cabinet wearily file down  
Under arrest. There is no looting done,  
No violence, save of necessity,  
As elemental force moves from its place  
To its appointed place. The power swings  
Unto the proletariat. The sign



Of that dark urge, to make it manifest,  
Our swift decree accomplishes two deeds  
Of simple right, at which all Christendom  
Shall howl with execration:—workers have  
The factories, and peasants have the land.  
Now Secret Treaties, out of archives haled,  
Are given light. The workers of the world  
Shall see what Britain, France and Italy  
With the old Tsardom bartered for their blood.  
Russia, the mother of more war-dug graves  
Than all the nations, calls them all to peace.

#### INTELLIGENZIA

Walking your traitorous path you walk alone.  
Do you suppose our youth through tortured years  
Faced exile, dungeon, madness and despair  
For us to see the substance of our hope,—  
Free speech, free press, assemblage of the free,—  
Pledges exchanged with people of free lands,—  
Pierced through by your usurping bayonets?  
Behold the nation's delegates dispersed  
By no Tsar's hand, by your own bloody hand!  
Ironic banners scattered on the snow  
"Long live the Master of the Russian Land"—\*  
The representative assembly wrecked  
For which you clamored when you first seized power.  
Take warning,—we are training, thought and skill.  
We starve before we aid your government!

---

\*i. e. the Constituent Assembly



## BOLSHEVIKS

We must go on without you then. The power  
That long ago gave shelter, light and food,  
Appears now to give law. The people's will,—  
Oppose it or support, move or be crushed.  
Dare you deny we are its furtherers?  
Look at the host streaming from Petrograd  
Against the advancing Cossacks. Factory girls,  
Workmen, some armed with shovels, half-grown  
boys,  
Soldiers in rags, a people's army vowed  
To save the Revolution, singing march  
Hungry and cold to meet their dreadful foe.  
At Tsarskoe Selso and Gatchina they  
Turn not for bullets. Over No Man's land  
They plead for workers' unity, until  
The Cossacks, loath to sponsor civil war,  
Surrender. (The Intelligenza,  
Persuaded not, resort to sabotage).  
We must go on unaided. Soldiers pore  
Laboriously on figuring and books,  
Sailors with more exertion than they use  
In launching ships, play keys of typewriters.  
Awkwardly workingmen plug in and out  
Upon the switchboards of the telephones.  
The army, starving and disintegrated,  
Cries out for general peace. A conference  
Between Russia and Germany is planned  
At Brest-Litovsk. Our representatives  
Have more experience with Siberian cells

Than with diplomacy, but such a cause,—  
World peace,—needs no word-mincing. All the allies  
Invited, war may cease on every front.

SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

The guns along the Russian line are still.  
Jubilant soldiers tell their enemies  
To go home, start a German Revolution  
Like theirs — they speak to the unwitting teeth  
And the unwitting claws of the bright beast  
That will make love unto its prostrate prey  
When the striped tiger, mid-air in his leap,  
Twists him about, repentant, to eat grass. (Exit)

BOLSHEVIKS

The Germans have betrayed us. They propose  
Peace that impresses Austrian monarchy  
On Poland,— Lithuania and Courland  
Mere German duchies in an iron ring.  
We shall not ratify a shameful peace!  
Let us refuse. At any moment now  
The Revolution breaks in Germany!

LENIN (*inexorably*)

Comrades, the Russian army is a rout  
Of famished peasants making for their homes.  
What arms have we left to oppose the terms?  
Only one chance remains. We have appealed

To Paris, London and to Washington,  
With word to the Allies if they send aid  
We will refuse to ratify the peace.

#### MESSENGER

The Germans break the truce ; their ranks advance  
Upon the Revolution. They have seized  
Esthonia, Dvinsk, Werder and Lutsck.  
The Red Guards are outnumbered. They must strike  
Not only German legions, but the troops  
Of Kaledin and Korniloff, and force  
Of the Ukraine, controlled by German arms.  
Though we recaptured Orsha, it postpones  
Defeat but for an instant. They advance.

#### AT THE ALL-RUSSIAN SOVIET

The foe is thirty miles from Petrograd.  
Already bourgeoisie within the town  
Hail them, rejoicing, as deliverers.  
No answer comes from the Allies. Perforce  
We ratify. Their knees are on our chest.

#### SPIRIT OF TOLSTOI (*unheeded*)

Refuse to ratify! Let them advance!  
The ghostly armies of deliverance wait  
Upon your unarmed might!

#### BOLSHEVIKS

To save the Revolution we must sign.  
The war drains life too sorely needed, where

Reaction through the city creeps again  
On the old slimy trails of drunkenness,  
Dissension, murder, spying and deceit,  
Where the new world of discipline and work  
And order slowly builds on motherhood  
Safeguarded, shelter adequate for all,  
And children fostered as the nation's pride.  
We need life for the new world ; how should we  
Spill life in war? Nor can we if we would.  
The Old Army is not. The Red Guards stand  
The one remaining bulwark of defense.  
If they die fighting Germany the Tsar  
Returns unchallenged. If this peace demand  
Surrendering the imperial city, we  
Surrender Petrograd ; if it demand  
Surrendering the holy city, we  
Surrender Moscow, to the Volga, back,  
Forced ever back (distance is infinite,  
It swallowed up one conquest)\* ever back,  
Somewhere, upon some strip of Russian land  
We shall preserve the Revolution, there  
Training our force invincibly to sweep,  
Red circling flame, about its priceless hoard.  
And so we sign, at one stroke cut adrift  
From friends that are no friends, that choose to see  
Russia in German hands before they aid  
The workers' rule. So be it. We have signed.

SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

I almost wish my years had made me deaf.

---

\*i. e. Napoleon's

I that have heard all noise since time began  
Quail at the roarings that reverberate  
From Russia's allies, lest they burst my drums.  
Does the increasing sound, I wonder, mean  
Merely increasing temper, or approach?

#### MESSENGER

The Revolution breaks in Germany.

#### SPIRIT OF REALISM

Well, pamphlet-printers, are you satisfied?  
A trifle early for your benefit  
You dreamed this dream; fate takes her precious toll  
For trying to anticipate her pace.  
Here comes your dream, too late for saving Russia.

#### RUSSIAN PEOPLE

Peace, peace at last! No more shall refugees  
Descend like gray disaster on the towns,  
No more our fields be stripped to nourish death,  
No more our straight and laughing boys be turned  
To heaps of rotten clay. Now we shall bend,  
All Russia as one giant, to the task  
Of the new world,— the earth-strong giant bends  
Against dawn twilight darkly, without tools.  
It well may be the Allies will exchange  
Books, engines, tractors, for our forest wealth.  
Peace, peace at last!

SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

Like others of the family, your hope  
Is false. Troops, transports, guns and poison gas  
Will be the allied gifts. Do you suppose  
Old powers will not strike this Titan hand  
That, seizing earth, down to the deepest mine  
Shakes and transforms? The measure of a force  
Is the resistance offered it. Your dream,  
Dared not before on any coast of light,  
Is infinite; your suffering will be.  
The powers coalesce in earth and air  
Against the Revolution,— deadly shapes  
Of fact more deadly still.

INTERVENTION

\*Steel bayonets, encircling Russia, drive  
Inward,— the hordes of Kolchak from the east  
Across Siberia; out of the west,  
Finland and Lithuania; from the north,  
America, France, Britain; from the south  
The tanks and aeroplanes of Denikin.  
Out of Esthonian marshes, Yudenich.  
Out of Crimea, Wrangel's cavalry.\*

THE ALLIES

Famine and cold fight with us. We blockade  
Ukrainian wheatlands; oil fields of Baku;  
Turkestan cotton; coal mines of the Don.  
Within your ears your dying mothers' groans  
And dying children's plead our cause to you.  
We keep supply trains from the towns; we keep

---

The passage between the two asterisks is taken almost verbatim from  
Albert Rhys Williams' "Through the Russian Revolution".

From waiting furrows Danish seed you bought,  
Until the Revolution on its knees  
Recant, and beg admission once again  
To civilized councils.

#### THE CHURCH

We excommunicate you. We, that turned  
At the Tsar's will, your earthly life to hell,  
For sin prolong the doom eternally.

#### BUREAUCRATS

You think us dead. Grant that we are,— a law  
More horrible than nature's now holds sway.  
The dead have power to breed ; they propagate  
Offspring corrupted as themselves. Damp hate,  
Eyeless betrayal, tongueless compromise,  
Greed, savageness, and crawling apathy,  
White Terror, born within the tomb, confront  
The living with their number, who, aghast,  
Are pressed on all sides by the mouldering dead.  
Still the disintegrations bear their kind  
Until their progeny may well efface  
The living, and all Russia be one grave.

#### THE EARTH

Words move me not. Dreams move me not. I give  
Fruit for seed given ; when within my breast  
Munitions fall, and blood and bones of men,  
What harvest shall I bear? Russia, I turn



Against you, for your sin or for another's  
I care not. Stone my heart to you henceforth.  
Your children will stretch hands to me in vain.

#### DISEASE

Planner of cities all electrified,  
Planner of school and factory, scientist  
In freezing room wielding your instruments,  
Housewife still searching desperate for bread,  
Engineer gloating on canal completion  
That links the Volga to the Baltic, child  
And artist, clerk and teacher, I shall call  
A Soviet, All-Russian, of my own.  
Now only see how, breathed on by my breath,  
The trained mind turns blank as the idiot's,  
The husband knows no more the wife; the seer  
Of cosmic law envisions crawling filth,  
Artist like beggar gropes on empty air.

#### SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passing through*)

All things speak with my tongue. I may be still.

#### CAPITALISM

To the oppressed in other lands we make  
Your name a byword. They call judgment down  
Not on their own despoilers, but on you.  
You shall be loathed by those you would set free.  
The terror of your name shall bind their chains  
More close.



## MILITARISM

You think, when the Red Army has hurled back  
Poland and Wrangel; Britain, France, Japan,  
Kolchak and Denikin successively,  
When the world's grip is loosed from Russia's throat,  
The flower of the Soviet slain for me,  
I loose my hold? In sinew and in nerve,  
In habitude of murder I shall live.  
Arrest, court-martialling and censorship,  
Espial and police, are my old sauce.  
I swallowed up each Empire in turn  
Upon the earth, and still have appetite  
To swallow up the Red Republic. Here  
I hover, waiting till necessity —

## SPIRIT OF REALISM (*passes through, talking to himself*)

Through black mist and through mist like blood I  
look  
And see not, for the bulk of hostile shapes,  
But still I hear the sound of common life  
Pursued in equity,— the ring of tools.

## RUSSIAN PEOPLE

The new world waits our hammering; we build.

THE END













UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

811W586H0

C001

THE HOUR OF JUDGMENT BOST



3 0112 025323350